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SUBJECT: Defense Minister Jobim on Brazilian Military's Role in Changing World

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED - PLEASE PROTECT ACCORDINGLY.

¶1. (U) Summary: During remarks that closed a three-day conference on Strategic Studies at the Brazilian Army Staff School (ECEME) in Rio, Brazilian Minister of Defense Nelson Jobim offered comments on a variety of challenges facing the Brazilian military, and how it is confronting those challenges. Issues he addressed included the role of the military, transnational threats, protecting natural resources including the Amazon, and the military's role in restoring law and order in urban areas. End summary.

MINISTRY NEEDS TO DEFINE ITS ROLE  
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¶2. (U) On June 5, Brazilian Minister of Defense Nelson Jobim spoke before a standing room-only audience of more than 600 at the Brazilian Army Staff School in Rio de Janeiro. His remarks closed ECEME's eighth annual Conference on Strategic Studies, an event that gathers military officers, political leaders, and members of the diplomatic community in a wide-ranging discussion of military strategies and priorities in a changing world. Jobim emphasized the Ministry of Defense needs to clearly define its purpose and to invest in the equipment that would allow the military to carry out that mission. Noting, "Brazil is a big nation and we need to think big," he stressed that the GOB would have to adjust its budget to meet these requirements, and that the GOB should concentrate on strengthening its domestic arms industry, favoring Brazilian products when it comes to military procurement. He also referred to on-going Brazilian talks with French defense industry representatives on developing a nuclear-propulsion submarine.

TODAY'S THREAT: ASYMMETRIC WARFARE  
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¶3. (U) The MinDef stated that, despite various border tensions between other countries in the region, Brazil does not contemplate having any conflicts with neighboring countries and instead offered that the real threat today is "asymmetric" warfare, including transnational criminal organizations and terrorists. He noted that defining the role of the military in confronting such asymmetric warfare is crucial.

THE COST OF DEFENDING NATURAL RESOURCES  
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¶4. (U) Jobim also folded in natural resources as an aspect of defending the national territory. He pointed out that when Brazil sells its natural resources, be it oil, iron ore or other resources, national defense is a legitimate cost in calculating the price of the product. (Note: This echoed comments he made the previous day, reported in local media, in which he suggested that a company like Petrobras, interested in having the Navy protect its ever-growing offshore assets, might be interested in helping to finance that enhanced protection. End Note)

¶5. (U) Turning to the Amazon, Jobim stated the military needs to develop new ways to monitor that region, given the unique challenges

it poses. He cautioned against taking either extreme position: whether it is those -- especially "foreign entities" -- who believe that the only thing in the Amazon is trees, or those who advocate development that does not take into consideration protection of the environment, both groups neglect the millions of people who live in the region. If people do not have a legal means to pursue a decent standard of living, he said, they would naturally find illegal ways of doing so. The MinDef referred to a survey currently underway to record, register, and regulate all NGOs working in the Amazon region, and suggested that only those NGOs operating with previously approved activities would be permitted to remain.

#### JOBIM AGAINST MILITARY ROLE IN CURBING URBAN VIOLENCE

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¶6. (U) On a separate note, in response to a question from an audience member, Minister Jobim stated that he would not authorize participation by the military in restoring law and order in the urban slums, where violence is rife, until the GOB passes clear laws approving such operations by the military because previous similar operations have resulted in numerous lawsuits.

#### COMMENT

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¶7. (SBU) Minister Jobim's remarks come at a time when Brazil's claims to an extended continental shelf zone following new off-shore oil discoveries, combined with the re-launched Fourth Fleet, long-standing concerns about foreign interference in the Amazon, and well-aired differences over approaches to biofuels, could provide potentially fertile ground for those who wish to see conflict rather than cooperation in areas where the United States and Brazil are

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working together. While Jobim's remarks clearly outlined Brazil's security challenges, they were also carefully aimed at building his own political standing by pushing such populist buttons as the need to protect oil fields and the regulation of NGOs. End Comment.

¶8. This cable has been coordinated with and cleared by Embassy Brasilia.

MARTINEZ